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President: Mr. Gurirab ..... (Namibia)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 27

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union

Report of the Secretary-General (A/54/379)

Draft resolution (A/54/L.9)

The President: I give the floor to the representative of India to introduce draft resolution A/54/L.9.

Mr. Sharma (India): I have the honour, on behalf of 133 sponsors, to introduce the draft resolution contained in document A/54/L.9, on cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU).

Last year, we had spoken about the important work being done in the IPU, and at the national level in India, for the empowerment of women and to redress gender imbalances. We are therefore particularly pleased that this year the Deputy Chairman of the Upper House of the Indian Parliament has been elected as the first woman President of the Inter-Parliamentary Council in the 110-year history of the IPU.

The text of the draft resolution has been jointly prepared by the delegations of the States members of the Executive Committee of the IPU. I believe that it commands overwhelming support, as is clear from the number of sponsorships it has received, which is at the highest level ever. In addition, the following States have also become sponsors: Australia, El Salvador, Eritrea, Mauritania and Swaziland, for a total of 138 sponsors.

The Secretary-General, in his report to the General Assembly, has highlighted the intensification of cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU in several areas. The report also especially welcomes the progress made in preparing for the Conference of Presiding Officers of National Parliaments, which is to be held at United Nations Headquarters from 30 August to 1 September 2000, in conjunction with the Millennium Assembly. We are happy to note that the representative of the Secretary-General has been regularly participating in the meetings of the IPU Preparatory Committee for this first-ever Conference of Presiding Officers. We share the Secretary- General's hope that this Conference will be a major milestone in efforts to enhance people's understanding of, and support for, the United Nations through their elected representatives.

Substantially, the concerns of the United Nations and the IPU are common. The relationship between them dates back to the establishment of the United Nations, in which the IPU played a significant part. As the President of the General Assembly, addressing the meeting of Parliamentarians, said two days ago:

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> "With its membership and activities transcending members' political convictions, culture, religion and economics, the IPU is ideally placed for playing a constructive role in our common search for finding workable solutions to the problems besetting our nations and peoples". (*GA/SM/115*)

Today, in the 110th year of the establishment of the IPU, when the next century is just a few weeks away, we must make an appraisal of past achievements and, in their light, design a future course of action to complete the unfinished agenda and to face new and emerging challenges.

Among the priority tasks before the United Nations and the IPU today is the need to promote the development of developing countries in a globalizing world. We must work to make globalization equitable, broad-based and informed with ethical concern so that it responds to the aspirations of all and leads to the marginalization of none. One of the demonstrated fallout effects of globalization has been accentuated marginalization. The Secretary-General has himself spoken of this. To quote from his observations at Davos this year:

> "Globalization is a fact of life. But I believe we have underestimated its fragility...The spread of markets far outpaces the ability of societies and their political systems to adjust to them, let alone to guide the course they take. History teaches us that such an imbalance between the economic, social and political realms can never be sustained for very long." (*SG/SM/6881*)

The IPU has taken up the cause of the large segment of humanity which is not a beneficiary of globalization and, at the recent conference in Berlin, discussed the need to revise the current global financial and economic model, and adopted a resolution which called for special initiatives for underdeveloped, debt-ridden countries.

Cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU now extends to several specialized agencies and bodies of the United Nations system. We are pleased that during the course of last year an Agreement of Cooperation was concluded between the IPU and the International Labour Organization, as also a Memorandum of Understanding with the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, thereby opening up new avenues for support by national parliaments for the work of the United Nations system.

During the last year, IPU has continued to consider issues such as disarmament, global peace, social development, environment, population and parity between men and women, which are important areas of the work of the United Nations. It has supplemented United Nations conferences and summits in the past, and will continue to do so in the future, by organizing specialized meetings of parliamentarians on their themes. It proposes, among other things, to hold a joint meeting with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) later this year on women and democracy, as well as tripartite interactions in the context of the five-year reviews of the implementation of the World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women.

The positive picture that I have briefly outlined demonstrates the potential of cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union. There is an essential similarity in the approach, convergence of actions and, most importantly, a perfect congruence of the objectives of the two organizations. It is for this reason that the draft resolution, in its preambular part, having recalled resolution 53/13 of 28 October 1998, notes with appreciation the activities carried out by the Inter-Parliamentary Union during the past year in support of United Nations actions in the fields of peace and security, economic and social development, international law and human rights, democracy, governance and gender issues.

Furthermore, in its operative part it welcomes the support provided to the United Nations and expresses the wish that the cooperation will be further strengthened and enhanced in the third millennium. It also welcomes the information contained in the Secretary-General's report regarding preparations for the Conference of Presiding Officers of National Parliaments and requests the Secretary-General to examine and report on the possibilities of inviting the Inter-Parliamentary Union to report to the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly — the Millennium Assembly — on the outcome of that Conference.

In operative paragraph 4, the draft resolution requests the Secretary-General to submit a report to the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session on various aspects of cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union. Finally, in operative paragraph 5, it decides to include in the provisional agenda of the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly

an item entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union".

In conclusion, and given the fact that the draft resolution that I have just introduced has no financial implications for the programme budget, I wish to propose, on behalf of all the sponsors, that it be adopted by consensus.

Allow me to depart from my printed text to convey our deep condolences and sense of shock to the people of Armenia on the deaths of the Prime Minister, Speaker and several Members of Parliament, who were assassinated today by gunmen inside the parliamentary building, and to condemn that dastardly and execrable act.

Ms. Bušić (Croatia): At the outset, I would like to extend my sincere greetings to all present, and to express my appreciation for having the opportunity to speak about cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU).

Since 1992, the year of its admission to the Inter-Parliamentary Union, Croatia, a Central European and Mediterranean country, which I represent, has attended all of the regular, as well as most of the specialized IPU conferences, taking an active part in the debates on the most topical issues in the world. Our parliamentarians have also participated in the work of various committees, including the Co-ordinating Committee of the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians. I should like to state that this has been a constant learning process for us.

The IPU has been diversifying the scope of its actions and activities in accordance with the most pressing issues and demands on humanity on the eve of a new millennium. Even though the resolutions, declarations and recommendations adopted by the IPU are not binding on its 138 members, they represent the best that contemporary political thinking and practice can yield. They reflect an accumulation of knowledge and a body of reference material to which parliaments can resort according to their specific or general needs.

The role of the IPU as an organization practising, reinforcing and encouraging parliamentary diplomacy in areas of potential crisis is of paramount importance. I would like to mention just a few examples, which are of particular relevance to our part of the world. The IPU was quick to foresee and monitor the sequence of events following the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia and the emergence of Slovenia and Croatia after the first democratic elections were held in those two neighbouring States. At that time, Mr. Anders Johnsson, the present IPU Secretary General, led a fact-finding mission to the areas concerned and actually saw for himself occupied regions of Croatia, as well as displaced persons in Croatian refugee camps.

The IPU has also been monitoring elections in new democracies all over the world. Its human rights Committee has been observing practices in various places around the world where there are flagging democracies, including practices against political adversaries, and it has been called on to help in many turbulent situations.

The Middle East Committee has been very active on an off-and-on basis, and its Group of Facilitators for Cyprus has recently seen some positive developments in its main area of concern. Another recent, positive development, is the IPU meeting of women parliamentarians, which is gaining ever-increasing recognition and prominence. It is heartening to be able to bear witness to women's growing self-confidence and resolve in applying the necessary instruments and tools to improve their situation on a global scale.

Women's issues and rights are, in many ways, men's issues too, only they are often viewed by women from a different, more practical or pragmatic angle. The empowerment of women means the empowerment of humanity. IPU Council President, Mrs. Heptulla, who was recently elected, could certainly be a mentor to guide us in this direction, defining the mission of the IPU at its recent 102nd Conference as being carried out by a confederation of the conscience-keepers of democracy.

It is indeed a positive development that the IPU and the United Nations have joined hands in their endeavours. The latter has thus acquired a parliamentary dimension that can contribute significantly to its standing and credibility, as well as assist in conditioning public opinion through the representatives elected by and for the people.

Let me comment briefly at this point on several other IPU and United Nations actions and activities that have won Croatia's strong approval and support. The President of the Croatian Parliament looks forward to taking part in the Conference of Presiding Officers of National Parliaments to be held in this building in late summer 2000. The President has attended similar European conferences, such as those of the presiding speakers of parliaments of the Central European Initiative member States, as well as of Council of Europe

members, and has invariably found such exchanges both supportive and inspiring. It is our hope that the IPU Conference of Presiding Officers will offer an even broader outlook.

As far as our support for the International Criminal Court (ICC) is concerned, it is Croatia's position that no one should be exempt from being held responsible for any acts or deeds against humanity, war crimes or other such crimes which fall within the competence of the ICC.

With a view to promoting peace and security, Croatia has signed the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and is prepared to work towards the elimination of all nuclear weapons. We were among the first to adhere to the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. Croatia is making every effort to ensure full compliance with the treaty since, in the aftermath of the war of aggression against our country, landmines represent one of Croatia's fundamental problems. Mines kill or maim people on an almost daily basis, prevent farmers from working their land and, furthermore, prevent refugees and displaced persons from returning safely to their homes.

As far as the process of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in the Mediterranean (CSCM) is concerned, Croatia has a special interest because of its geopolitical position, among other factors. We believe that, given the importance of the CSCM in all of its numerous and varied facets, it deserves stronger support, including administrative support as envisaged and drafted in Valletta, Malta, or other practical support.

With regard to the scourges of today's world, such as the global drug problem, terrorism, bribery and corruption, forced child labour, child prostitution, other forms of child abuse and illicit trafficking in arms and weapons, Croatia has a very firm stand and has been combating them resolutely.

I have mentioned only the most important topics of concern to the IPU. Given the fact that all these issues are dealt with by both the IPU and the United Nations in their respective ways, it appears both prudent and logical that, in joining forces, the two organizations could resolve them more effectively and expeditiously.

Therefore, allow me to express my appreciation for the ever-growing cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union and to reiterate my firm belief that this tradition will be further strengthened and enhanced as we face the challenges of the third millennium. The IPU, as the world's oldest and largest assembly of parliamentarians, is an extraordinary source of democratic representation and can certainly strengthen the mechanisms for democratic control of the United Nations.

Mr. Hønningstad (Norway): I am honoured to have this opportunity to address the General Assembly on the important issue of cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). The draft resolution before us in document A/54/L.9 strongly supports further strengthening the cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union. As a sponsor of the draft resolution, Norway is confident that the General Assembly will adopt it by consensus.

Generally speaking, the United Nations has done a good job over the past 50 years in harmonizing the interests of nations and promoting cooperation among them. But we all know that the United Nations is faced with many problems. The ongoing reform of the Organization speaks for itself. If we are to face up to the global problems of our time, certain changes must be made. The key concept for politics in the twenty-first century will be legitimacy. Legitimacy derives from democracy, and democracy depends on the representatives of the people: the parliamentarians of the world.

That is why the Norwegian Government has supported the reform proposals of the Secretary-General, which would involve parliaments more actively in the work of the United Nations. The full realization of the potential of the United Nations depends on a proper relationship with parliaments and on input from them. It is also in this context that we see the potential of the IPU. The support of the IPU in areas such as conflict prevention, human rights and the promotion of representative democracy has increased the effect and relevance of United Nation activities in these areas.

The IPU itself will be facing strategic challenges in its efforts to influence global politics over the next few decades. One of these challenges will be to establish the proper relationship with the United Nations. The basis for cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU is the agreement signed by the two organizations in 1996. That agreement provides a useful platform for the involvement of parliaments in the work of the United Nations.

However, after having spoken with a number of representatives from the Norwegian Parliament, some of whom are present here today, it is our feeling that the implementation of the agreement has lagged behind. One argument put forward is that if the IPU is to take a clear stand on the major issues of the day, it will need to ensure that the multiplicity of views expressed at its conferences is translated into a focused working programme.

My Government welcomes the plan to hold a Conference of Presiding Officers of National Parliaments in this Hall next year in conjunction with the Millennium Assembly. We look forward to the outcome of the Conference and support the suggestion that the IPU should be invited to report on its discussions to the Millennium Assembly.

It is our hope that this crossroads will provide an opportunity for both organizations to continue to develop a constructive parallelism both in terms of examining the global challenges of the day and in terms of formulating responses to those challenges.

Mr. Hachani (Tunisia) (*spoke in French*): The General Assembly's annual consideration of cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) reflects the interest of the international community in the contribution that such cooperation can make to the realization of the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter.

The report of the Secretary-General on this item (A/54/379), for which we thank him, describes the diverse spheres of activity in which the cooperation of the Inter-Parliamentary Union can be valuable. Over the past year, parliamentarians of our respective countries, through their own organization, the IPU, have been considering such questions of importance to the United Nations as disarmament, in the field of nuclear disarmament and anti-personnel landmines; promoting respect for international humanitarian law; promoting democracy and human rights; and economic and social development.

Over the past year, the Inter-Parliamentary Union has also devoted special attention to problems in various parts of the world, such as the situation in the Middle East. Here, it has lent its support to the initiative of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People through the participation of the President of the IPU Council in the Bethlehem 2000 International Conference convened in February 1999 in Rome. At the IPU Conference on Security and Cooperation in the Mediterranean, held in Ljubljana, Slovenia, it also expressed support for the Bethlehem 2000 Project.

My country attaches special importance to strengthening and consolidating security and cooperation in the Mediterranean, an issue which has a prominent place in the agenda of the General Assembly. Tunisia has spared no effort in seeking to achieve these goals, and continues to work for them with all its partners in the region. On the basis of its convictions in this regard, Tunisia welcomes the valuable contribution made by parliamentarians through the IPU in the context of its Conferences on Security and Cooperation in the Mediterranean, the third of which will be held in March 2000 at Paris.

The Tunisian Parliament — a representative of which is an ex officio member of the IPU Executive Committee in her capacity as President of the Co-ordinating Committee of the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians — is playing an active role in the preparatory process for the Paris conference and, especially, for the thematic preparatory conferences. The most recent of these was held in Slovenia and addressed the important question of cooperation in armaments control in the Mediterranean with a view to preventing conflicts in the region.

As the Secretary-General so aptly notes in his report, the Conference of Presiding Officers of National Parliaments, to be held from 30 August to 1 September 2000 at United Nations Headquarters, could prove to be a major milestone in efforts made to enhance the people's understanding of and support to the United Nations through their elected representatives and in identifying ways of relaying United Nations decisions and recommendations more efficiently at the national political level for their effective follow-up. We believe that all our efforts should be aimed towards that goal and towards exploring ways to strengthen and deepen the relationship between the United Nations and the IPU.

We believe that the historic Millennium Assembly to be held in September 2000 should give the IPU an opportunity to assess the results of the Conference of Presiding Officers of National Parliaments, which will be held a few days before the Millennium Assembly itself.

The draft resolution before us, of which my country is a sponsor and which we hope will be adopted by general consensus, requests the Secretary-General to examine this possibility.

Mr. Filippi Balestra (San Marino): Since this is the first time I have had the opportunity to take the floor during the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly, Sir, let me congratulate you on your election. We are convinced that under your guidance and leadership the Assembly will be able to achieve important results.

The Republic of San Marino has always been a supporter of strengthening the cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). One of the main requirements for the implementation of United Nations initiatives and resolutions is deeper knowledge by national parliaments of the activities of our Organization and a greater awareness of the importance of its functions. In many cases, a lack of information leads to controversial exchanges between executive and legislative organs in matters related to the United Nations.

The Government of San Marino welcomes the decision to establish in New York an IPU Liaison Office and wishes to congratulate its newly appointed Director, Mr. Santiago Romero-Pérez. This presence in New York will represent a significant contribution to enhancing cooperation between the two organizations.

I also would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union" (A/54/379), which gives us an updated and exhaustive picture of how this cooperation has been implemented and will be implemented in the future. We are pleased to acknowledge that the cooperation between the two organizations has been further strengthened in the past year and that it has been expanded to many sectors of United Nations activities: world drug problems, peace and security, human rights, sustainable development, social development, rights of the child, health and environment.

My country shares the view that the Conference of Presiding Officers of National Parliaments, which will take place next year at United Nations Headquarters in conjunction with the Millennium Assembly, will represent a milestone in the history of cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU. Through that Conference and through the elected members of national parliaments taking part in it, we will have the opportunity to enhance people's understanding of the work of the United Nations and to gain stronger support for this Organization. National parliaments may, as well, identify more efficient procedures to assure a more effective follow-up at the national level to United Nations decisions and recommendations.

In the field of disarmament, we take note with appreciation of the encouragement given at the April 1999 Inter-Parliamentary Conference, held in Brussels, to all countries to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and to work towards the elimination of nuclear weapons. We also take note of the IPU resolution, adopted in September 1998 at Moscow urging parliaments to take the necessary steps to proceed rapidly to the ratification of the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. The recognition by national parliaments of the achievements of the United Nations in the area of disarmament gives our Organization new impetus because it constitutes proof that we are getting closer to our goals.

San Marino was the first European country to ratify the Statute of the International Criminal Court; therefore, we welcome the IPU recommendation to sign and ratify that important international instrument with a view to its early entry into force.

Among the numerous activities of the IPU, I would like to stress the importance of the Agreement of Cooperation it signed in 1999 with the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the first concrete example of its implementation. This consists of the joint IPU-ILO campaign for parliamentary action in support of the early signature, ratification and implementation of the ILO Convention Concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour. This scourge can be eliminated only by strong and effective legislative action.

Mr. Varga (Hungary): The Hungarian national group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) welcomes and supports cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union, and also the draft resolution before the General Assembly.

The main function of both the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union is to maintain and strengthen peace and to prevent war and brutality, so that the people may practice, freely and without fear, their human rights, including the rights of national minorities, and so that social justice may prevail. I am convinced that in the coming centuries these principles — human rights, the rights of national minorities and social justice — will dominate people's lives. Without them, there will be no peace. Moreover, they foster economic and social progress.

Therefore, the Hungarian group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union supports the agreement signed by the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union in 1996. In the United Nations, countries are represented by their Governments, while in the Inter-Parliamentary Union they are represented by the people, since in parliaments, Government and opposition work together.

Parliamentarians have a historical mission to promote these rights in their countries, because they are working hard for human dignity, without which nobody can be part of his country. Parliamentarians also have the historical mission of educating youngsters: they have to learn very soon about human rights and especially about respecting the rights of others. They can exercise human rights only in the spirit of fraternity. One of the most fundamental of the world's problems is that people do not respect one another and do not act in the spirit of fraternity.

The United Nations, the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the European Union and the European Parliament prove that with globalization we are coming closer to each other. No one can isolate himself, nor can any State isolate itself from the others. The rich cannot isolate themselves from the poor, nor the secure from the insecure. Everyone, all of us, is responsible for everyone else and responsible for peace. In my judgement, this is what is meant by globalization.

Therefore, the Inter-Parliamentary Union should be a political partner of the United Nations, and I hope that every year this partnership will become closer.

I would like to say a few words regarding Hungary. Next year the Hungarian nation will celebrate 1,100 years since the founding of our country and 1,000 years since we became Christians. During this time we have gone through many, many difficult periods, and the people have suffered a great deal. But, fortunately, the spirit of freedom, independence and human dignity have survived.

One of the most difficult periods came after the Second World War when Hungary was occupied by the former Soviet Union and, unfortunately, endured the dictatorship of the Hungarian Communist Party. I have to mention that that was the first regime in our history that not only used its power to dominate but also to interfere in the mental processes, intentions and activities of human beings. The United Nations has discussed genocide many times, but, unfortunately, to date it has yet to discuss brainwashing, which does tremendous damage to human beings' minds, citizens' minds, identities and characters. It is easier to recover from economic catastrophe than to restore a human being whose identity and character have been damaged.

We are now independent and free, and I am glad to report that in our country political terrorism is now unknown. During the 1,100 years of our history there have been very few such incidents.

Therefore, we would like to actively support the cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union, and we support the draft resolution on this cooperation. I hope that the members of the Hungarian Parliament will fulfil their historical mission.

Mr. Minoves-Triquell (Andorra) (*spoke in French*): Allow me first of all to express our most sincere condolences to the Armenian people for the painful events of today.

In 1996 the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the United Nations signed a cooperation agreement. Three years later, the fruits of this collaboration can be easily seen. A growing number of members of national parliaments are attending meetings in New York. With us today from Andorra are Mr. Miquel Alvarez Marfany, Vice-President of the Parliament, and Mr. Narcis Casal, a member of the Parliament.

The objectives and the work of the United Nations are becoming better known and analysed. This has made it possible for us to bring the debates and aspirations of the United Nations and of our civil societies into greater harmony through enhanced interaction with the elected representatives of our States.

As our cooperation deepens, it is extending to all spheres of United Nations activity. Last May the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Inter-Parliamentary Union also signed an Agreement of Cooperation. Similarly, in July the IPU and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights agreed on a Memorandum of Understanding. These two documents are in addition to the 1996 agreement and are intended to bring about greater support in national parliaments for initiatives and actions of the ILO and the Office of the High Commissioner with regard to treaties.

From the outset, the Principality of Andorra has been very favourable to increasing exchanges of information between the IPU and United Nations.

Parliamentary debate is the cornerstone of Andorra's constitutional system. Our assembly, the *Consell General*, dates from 1419; it is one of the oldest parliaments in the world. Ever since its creation, while continuing to evolve, it has been able to sit without interruption. For my country it seems quite natural that — as is provided by our Constitution — elected representatives of the people should be able to exercise parliamentary control with full knowledge of the facts. To do this they need the most extensive information available concerning the activities of our Governments at United Nations Headquarters.

In addition, Andorra is keenly aware that many of the substantive initiatives of the United Nations require the active participation of parliaments if they are to become truly universal. My country particularly appreciates the IPU's efforts to promote the signature and ratification of the Rome Statute establishing the International Criminal Court. In this regard, during the recent general debate of the fifty-fourth session of the Assembly, our head of Government declared that Andorra had begun the process of ratifying the Statute. We encourage all Member States to do the same.

(spoke in English)

The activities of the Inter-Parliamentary Union in support of the work of the United Nations this past year have been numerous. Various commitments from the IPU in matters of disarmament have promoted our Organization's goals of peace and security, and we must commend the Inter-Parliamentary Union for its work in promoting the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the Ottawa Convention on the prohibition of anti-personnel mines. Andorra, peaceful since 1278, signed the former and is a party to the latter. It recognizes the necessity for elected representatives to exercise leadership in pushing for the early adoption of international instruments on disarmament.

National parliaments are the pillars of representative democracy. By their very existence they symbolize rule of the people, by the people and for the people. Increased collaboration with the United Nations, through the IPU, can only enhance our work to make democracy the universal regime for all States.

One of the main challenges of the next century will be to help build stable institutions in many countries. We welcome, therefore, any contacts between the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme and the Inter-Parliamentary Union in order to give further impetus to governance issues at all levels. Andorra also appreciates the intensive cooperation established between the United Nations and the IPU on gender issues. We are looking forward to the tripartite meeting of representatives of parliaments, Governments and international organizations on the occasion of the June 2000 special session of the General Assembly, which is entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century" — better known as Beijing + 5.

(spoke in Spanish)

Andorra, as in the past, is co-sponsoring the draft resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU. The draft resolution announces the Conference of Presiding Officers of National Parliaments, which is to be held in conjunction with the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly — the Millennium Assembly — in this very Hall, from 30 August to 1 September 2000. That Conference will undoubtedly be a symbol of the strong relationship forged over the past few years between the United Nations and the parliaments of the world, through the IPU. The success of that meeting is ensured thanks to the splendid work of the President of the IPU Council, Ms. Najima Heptulla of India; of her predecessor, Mr. Miguel Angel Mártinez of Spain; and of Mr. Anders Johnnson, the Secretary-General. The Principality of Andorra will participate in the Conference of Presiding Officers and will continue to support the creation of close ties between the IPU and the United Nations.

Mrs. Imiolczyk (Poland) (*spoke in French*): The imminent change of centuries is not merely a symbolic turning point arising from the principles of the Gregorian calendar. With the end of the twentieth century, we would wish to leave forever behind the era of great world wars, holocaust, cold-war global divisions and many no-less-tragic local conflicts. If the onset of the new millennium is to be a symbol to coming generations of peace and harmonious development among all nations, we will have to learn to see our planet's problems from a different perspective. We must, first and foremost, draw attention to the current system of the security of nations.

The international security system, created on the heels of the Second World War, is not entirely in sync with current reality, where most conflicts are not between but within States. From this has arisen the ever widening awareness of the need to review our ideas of sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of States, and

to reconsider the principles of international law in a new spirit. Lasting peace and security in international relations can be established only in conditions in which human rights and fundamental freedoms are respected.

The first important steps in this direction have already been taken. The interventions in Kosovo and East Timor demonstrated the international community's recognition of the political and moral imperative to act in the face of human rights violations. The primacy of the individual and his rights must always be adequately reflected in international law. Nevertheless, humanitarian operations cannot serve as pretexts to dominate other States.

Current developments in the international system should also result in a greater common awareness of our interdependence and shared responsibility for the world's fate. In this context, we should consider the principle of international solidarity and the need to emphasize it. This principle should be inherent in what is known as the "culture of prevention".

Economic and social cooperation should be aimed at redressing the imbalances between rich and poor countries. We should give a human face to globalization. The struggle against marginalization and the creation of equal opportunities for all countries should be foremost in our minds as we formulate recommendations related to economic and social cooperation.

The international community agrees on the need to effect certain changes in the functioning of the United Nations. We support the ideas and efforts of the Secretary-General in that respect. We believe that reform must be based on a new reading of the United Nations Charter in the spirit of today's problems and challenges. Security Council reform is the most widely discussed of these issues. We must improve the effectiveness and efficiency of its work. The Council, occasionally pulled by diverse political considerations, cannot shirk its statutory obligations or obstruct the decision-making process.

In calling for international institutional reform, we must not forget the growing role of parliamentary diplomacy on the world scene. An increasing number of States are embarking on the establishment of parliamentary democratic systems. Parliamentarians are participating ever more widely in the development of their States' international policy. They influence their countries' positions in the United Nations agencies and other international organizations. In most democratic States, they have a decisive influence on the process of concluding and signing international agreements and they evaluate their Governments' foreign policies. Through the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and other regional inter-parliamentary organizations, they participate actively in international life. Direct contact among parliamentarians throughout the world, especially in the framework of the IPU, can help to prevent conflicts or to find peaceful settlements and can help spread the principles of democracy and equal rights to the four corners of the planet.

We readily endorse the ongoing cooperation between the IPU and the United Nations and its agencies. We are convinced that the strengthening of links between these organizations is indispensable to the welfare of all the world's communities. It is with great hope that we await the Conference of Presiding Officers of National Parliaments, to be held here at United Nations Headquarters in the year 2000. This wide representation of the highest authorities of our parliaments will show that parliamentarians care deeply about the world's fate and can contribute to solving the most pressing problems of our planet.

Mr. Wibisono (Indonesia): It is indeed a great honour and privilege for my delegation to speak in the current deliberations of the General Assembly on agenda item 27, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union". On behalf of the Indonesian parliamentarians, I would like to convey to all representatives that our participation in today's debate is of the utmost importance, since cooperation between the United Nations, which consists of States as its Members, and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), which represents the core of nation States — that is, their people — has become an imperative necessity. However, due to the important role and activities of the People's Consultative Assembly, which in our system includes the House of Representatives and whose members were recently elected through general elections held last June, the Indonesian parliamentarians were not able to attend this event.

We have placed great hopes in the post-cold-war era in the establishment of a new and equitable world order of stable peace, common security and generalized prosperity. Such a new order must be firmly rooted in the rule of law, the principles of the United Nations Charter, as well as equitably shared responsibility and joint commitment to global cooperation and solidarity. However, on the eve of a new millennium those high

expectations have not been met. The world today is still far from being peaceful, just and secure. Simmering disputes, conflicts, ethnic strife and religious intolerance have become serious obstacles to amity and harmony among States and peoples.

In addition, the enormous force of globalization, driven by the advancement of science and technology, instead of serving to unify humankind in a determined and conscious assault against the persistent and systemic problems of our time, is continuously being used to press the advantage of the strong over the weak, and is thereby widening the gap between the developed and the developing worlds. Further compounding the situation is the world economy, which is on the edge of recession in both the developed and the developing countries. Furthermore, the adverse effects of financial crisis on the developing nations appear at present to be beyond redemption. It would take a massive and comprehensive effort by all the parties concerned, including the major international economic players and financial institutions, to remedy the situation. Even though early signs of economic recovery have emerged, we have a long way to go in the reform and restructuring of the global economic system and in strengthening the capacity of the United Nations system to enhance international development and cooperation.

In the light of these concrete and undeniable global realities, cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU, each of which has its own unique characteristics, should be further reinforced in order to unify the international community and each nation-State and its people. The report of the Secretary-General, contained in document A/54/379, focuses attention on the importance of such cooperation between the two organizations in the fields of the promotion of peace and security, the promotion of democracy and follow-up of the decisions of recent United-Nations-sponsored conferences. In this context, and in conjunction with the Millennium Assembly, the Secretary-General welcomes the progress made in the preparation of the Conference of Presiding Officers of National Parliaments, which is to be held at United Nations Headquarters from 30 August to 1 September 2000.

In our view, the struggle to bring about a stable and secure environment is closely linked with economic growth and development. Conflict prevention and post-conflict peace-building are meaningless unless they enable a society to develop, particularly in terms of reducing poverty and underdevelopment. Social and ethnic tensions have continued to persist in many parts of the world due to lack of progress in these critical areas. In this connection, sustained deliberations within the IPU and between it and the United Nations could make a significant contribution to international cooperation in development efforts.

The new millennium will, we hope, offer us a new and fresh impetus for enhancing, even changing, our perspectives, which could point the way to new approaches that are credible and widely accepted not just by Governments, but most important of all, by their very own peoples.

We in Indonesia know how difficult that kind of change can be. In response to the Asian financial crisis, as well as to its social and political impact, we have begun to reform our social, economic and political institutions. New laws are being passed; new ways are being tried to give our people the widest opportunity to participate in the making of decisions that affect their lives, to level the economic playing field and to earn the confidence of our foreign partners. With the outcome of the general election, the People's Consultative Assembly recently, *inter alia*, adopted new State guidelines and elected a new President and Vice-President of the Republic.

Adherence to the commitments of the IPU and the United Nations, and to their Statutes and Charter respectively, would greatly contribute to the achievement of a new world order that is free from war, poverty and injustice. To this end, dialogue and negotiations are crucial to the realization of our common interests. Striving for democratization based on universal principles and implementing change at the national level on the basis of a country's cultural background and level of advancement are vital to ensure the advancement of people's welfare. In adopting such approaches, the United Nations can provide the forum within the framework of a paradigm of equal participation and representation among its Member States, as well as among the United Nations agencies.

In conclusion, with the fresh air of hope and aspiration surrounding Indonesia, and also much of the rest of the world, as we enter the new millennium, we in Indonesia pledge ourselves to do our utmost through active participation in the IPU, in the United Nations and in their relations to enhance the work and outcomes of those two distinguished and distinct organizations in order to make this world a better place in which to live. Accordingly, Indonesia joined other delegations in sponsoring draft resolution A/54/L.9. Concurrently, we

are also making preparations to welcome all participants in the 104th Inter-Parliamentary Conference, scheduled to be held from 15 to 21 October 2000, in Jakarta, Indonesia.

Mr. Tjitendero (Namibia): It is a great honour for me to address this body. And it is indeed a proud moment for me in particular, and for Namibia, to see you, Sir, presiding over this body. This is a historic moment, because it is from here that you sounded the clarion call on behalf of the people of Namibia; it is here that you developed your diplomatic and political skills to persuade; and it is here that you are now guiding this body into the twenty-first century. Congratulations, Mr. President.

I am rising to speak on agenda item 27, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union". We are living in a globalizing world, and while the process of globalization might be inevitable, we have a duty to ensure that changes are understood and that they are directed to minimize the potential danger, in particular to poor third-world nations. We need to accept that globalization is taking place in a world that is very uneven in terms of the rich and the poor, the so-called developed and the underdeveloped, the fed and the unfed and debt-ridden. Therefore, we need to create well-organized and well-established organs to cope with the rapid movement of events and to ensure that these are in line with the universally accepted norms of social justice and equality for all. It is in this regard that the world's body of parliaments, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), could be of particular service in extending and operationalizing the programmes and objectives of the United Nations to civil society in the new millennium.

I would like to commend you, Mr. President, and the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for the personal interest you have shown in strengthening and deepening the cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU. I can assure you that we in the IPU are tremendously pleased, as this is a major milestone in our effort to foster a better understanding and cooperation based on our desire for survival on the finite resources that this globe has to offer.

As a basis of its operations, the IPU, through the national parliaments, continuously encourages Governments to ratify important United Nations treaties, conventions and resolutions in order to resolve international conflicts on a peaceful basis. The parliaments, through their debates, promote the culture of dialogue and tolerance within their national boundaries, at the regional level, through regional parliaments such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC) parliamentary forum in southern Africa, and at the international level, through organizations such as the IPU. Parliaments are the appropriate vehicles to educate and inform the citizenry at large, and in this context to create understanding of and support for initiatives that the United Nations is in the process of creating, such as the International Criminal Court. It is very important to support the Court, as dictators must not be far from being brought to justice. You are very well aware, Sir, that the Namibian Parliament is on record as supporting all these initiatives.

Let me also quote the very relevant words of the Secretary-General, who addressed members of the IPU the day before yesterday:

> "parliamentarians play a unique role in helping us meet these challenges. You are the institutional bridge between the State and civil society. You are the link between the local and the global. You are among the vital partners needed to build peace".

I therefore take it as a challenge to which we as national parliaments and parliamentarians must respond positively, not by drawing up long working plans, but simply by taking action on that clarion call by the Secretary-General.

In our efforts to attain this goal, the IPU is actively preparing for the Conference of Presiding Officers of National Parliaments, which is to take place in conjunction with the Millennium Assembly. Through that Conference, we in the IPU hope to enhance and consolidate the meaningful collaboration between these two organizations.

In conclusion, we in the Inter-Parliamentary Union are looking forward to the successful realization of a parliamentary dimension for the United Nations. We are extremely grateful for the personal commitment that you, Sir, and the Secretary-General have accorded to this initiative. It is my sincere hope that the envisaged new cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union will soon become a reality.

Mr. Owie (Nigeria): On behalf of the democratically elected Government and the people of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, I would like to express my appreciation to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive and succinct report on cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). I wish also to thank the Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations,

Ambassador Kamalesh Sharma, for introducing the draft resolution of which Nigeria is a sponsor.

Allow me at this juncture to send a message of condolences on behalf of the Nigerian delegation to the Republic of Armenia on the tragic incident that has just been announced. May the souls of the faithful departed rest in peace.

Allow me to congratulate the armed forces of the Principality of Andorra for their support for democracy since 1419. That is wonderful — and it is good for all African defence and military officials to note that it is good to guard democracy jealously. Our delegation is proud to stand at this rostrum at the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly, having accomplished a democratization process and having now been readmitted as a full-fledged member of the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

It is not a coincidence, but an act of God, that we should have been readmitted during the time that you, Sir, are serving as President of this great Assembly. Because of the personal relationship between Nigeria and Namibia, I congratulate you once again. Indeed, the National Assembly of Nigeria was readmitted to the IPU during the 165th session of the Inter-Parliamentary Council, which took place in Berlin from 11 to 16 October 1999. We reaffirm our full commitment to the goals of the organization and our determination to play an active role in the international community.

The Inter-Parliamentary Union, an organization with a membership of 139 parliaments and with five international parliamentary associations as associate members, has vast experience and expertise in the area of representative democracy and global parliamentary dialogue. There is no doubt that the IPU has much to offer the United Nations in advancing the quest for a more democratized global village. It is therefore gratifying to note the growing rapprochement between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

As an organization comprising representatives of people from both Government and opposition across the globe — although we did not have that in Nigeria — the IPU brings with it a broader understanding of the aspirations and the needs of people, an understanding that is beyond the scope of most other international bodies. It is our belief that the closer the relationship between the United Nations and the IPU, the better for the ordinary people of the world, since the resulting partnership and cross-fertilization of ideas between the two organizations will help to find better solutions to some of the fundamental problems confronting humanity today.

Our delegation is also pleased to learn of the progress made since the fifty-third session of the General Assembly by both the IPU and the United Nations in strengthening cooperation between those two important bodies. It is particularly significant to note that the IPU has established a Preparatory Committee for the Conference of Presiding Officers of National Parliaments to be held from 30 August to 1 September 2000 in conjunction with the Millennium Assembly. The Conference should facilitate the transmission of United Nations decisions and recommendations, through elected representatives of national parliaments, to ordinary citizens of United Nations Member States in a manner that is compatible with the democratic ideals of the United Nations.

As already enunciated by our President, Mr. Olusegun Obasanjo, in his address to the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly on 23 September 1999, Nigeria has successfully accomplished the transition to democracy with the support and understanding of the international community, and we are now actively pursuing the reconstruction and sustenance of our new democracy through a conscious policy of addressing economic development and poverty alleviation in our body politic. To this end, the present Administration has made a deliberate effort to include all political parties and interests in the governance of our country. In addition, the Government has put in place socio-economic policies and programmes to create an environment conducive to foreign investment into the economy, and to the enhancement of living conditions for the masses.

We are also convinced that a considerable reduction of the debt burden is a prerequisite for meaningful socio-economic development that will directly impact on the life of the people. Without such development, democracy itself will not be able to achieve the desired tangible and positive results it should normally bring as dividends to the people. Substantial debt relief is required by governments if they are to provide basic needs to their peoples. It is against this background that Nigeria will continue to urge the international financial institutions and creditor countries to provide debt relief which will serve as an essential ingredient in the success of durable democratic process.

Nigeria is committed to the pursuit of democratic values and to the policy and practice of inclusion and

reconciliation in its national politics. We also believe that this policy constitutes a more beneficial path than that of winner-takes-all.

As you are aware, the three major parties in Nigeria all have representatives in the Government, and we do not have organized cooperation within the National Assembly. Our delegation is therefore in full support of the cooperative initiative of the IAU and the United Nations Development Programme that resulted in the parliamentary seminar in May 1999 on relations between majority parties and the opposition in African parliaments.

The seminar adopted very useful guidelines on the rights and duties of the opposition in parliament. It is our belief that the recommendations contained in the guidelines would greatly influence the creation of an appropriate legal framework that would allow the opposition in parliament — although we do not have that type of arrangement in Nigeria — to participate more fully in the political and economic discourse affecting the people. It would also usher in an era of greater tolerance and cooperation between national Governments and the various political interests in the community. We also believe that such improved relations would go a long way in contributing to nation-building and the elimination of the conflicts that have characterized contemporary politics in Africa. As a responsible member of the international community, Nigeria will continue to play its part in the maintenance of international peace and security.

Nigeria believes that the global principle of democracy is also relevant to the United Nations. Since the inception of the United Nations in 1945, the Security Council was reformed only in 1965, when the original membership of 11 was increased to only 15, consisting of the same five permanent members and additional four seats to increase the total of non-permanent members to 10. It is therefore our view that democratization of the Security Council has become imperative, because the international community that it serves is undergoing a transformation that requires adjustment in the structure of the United Nations. As parliamentarians, we follow with interest the on-going debate on United Nations reform. There is a need for reform in the United Nations, and it is our expectation that the work in the Open-ended Working Group will be concluded early to result in the much-needed democratization of the principal organ of the United Nations, the Security Council.

Allow me to make an appeal to the friendly Assembly and the colleagues here. The Government of Olusegun Obasanjo and the National Assembly have been pursuing the retrieval of our money stocked in various foreign banks. We cannot do much, as we have said, unless you come to our aid with initiatives with the necessary legal backing for your executive group to get this money from the various banks. Very soon our parliament will be moving to make contact with you, so could you please have the executives of your country — particularly the United States, Britain, Germany, Switzerland and some other countries where this money is stocked — take steps so that we can get it back to our people.

In conclusion, Nigeria fully associates itself with the continuing cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU and looks forward to the strengthening of this cooperation as we approach the new millennium.

Ms. Galdi (Italy) (*spoke in Italian; English text furnished by the delegation*): First of all, I wish to confirm and underline the full and convinced support of Italy for the statement made by the Permanent Representative of India, Ambassador Kamalesh Sharma, to introduce the text of this draft resolution. Italy had the honour of being one of the first countries to sign onto the draft resolution, in its capacity as a member of the Executive Committee of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU).

Italy feels that today's debate extends well beyond the fundamental role that an enduring institution such as the IPU can play in the activities of the United Nations. Our debate goes to the very *raison d'etre* of the Organization. We must remember the needs on which the founding of the League of Nations was based following the first terrible conflict in this century to shake the entire planet — a war that like many others in the past found fertile ground in the culture of secrecy that had characterized international relations for centuries. This is why the President of the United States, Woodrow Wilson, coined the slogan "open diplomacy". This is why there was a revolution in international relations for the sake of transparency and democracy: two key words that mark the growing involvement in this century of national parliaments in the drafting of our countries' foreign policies.

Therefore, today we have to reflect on the progress that during the course of this century has led simultaneously to a greater role both for parliaments and for international peace organizations in the field of cooperation among peoples. Within the United Nations this role is based in particular on the central position that

must be granted to the body that represents the membership as a whole. I am referring to the General Assembly, to which every Member State belongs and where each can feel like a true participant in the activities of the United Nations. The General Assembly is the body that provides the link between the Organization and its Member States, just as parliaments are the true expression of popular sovereignty within Governments.

This is why it is important that the parliaments and the organization uniting them, the Inter-Parliamentary Union, should increase their involvement in the activities of the United Nations. Parliaments are the expression of the peoples of the United Nations and of civil society, which should acquire a more important role. For that matter, just as progress cannot be made in international relations without forging a consensus among Governments, it is impossible to concretize the results achieved through diplomatic negotiations without the consent of parliaments. An exemplary case is the historic result achieved with the approval of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. This was a watershed in the progress of international relations that risks becoming inconsequential if this agreement is not ratified through the commitment that is expected from parliaments throughout the world.

The extraordinary event that was the birth of the Court was thus due to the initial push of parliaments as an expression of civil society, and it will become a reality thanks to an act of will by the parliaments themselves. If parliaments are to be able to conscientiously judge all the activities of the United Nations, the works of all the United Nations bodies need to be comprehensible, accessible to all peoples and genuinely transparent. This transparency should be enduring and include all the bodies of the United Nations, not just the General Assembly, where it is self-evident, but also the Security Council, where transparency should go back to being the norm, as it was in the past.

Finally, I wish to recall a few of the many examples in which cooperation between United Nations bodies and parliaments can be fundamental. I refer to the collaboration underway between the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the IPU which, in concert with the Italian Parliament, organized an important conference in Rome in November of last year on the follow-up to the World Food Summit. On the occasion of the earlier Summit, a Parliamentary Day was held in the fall of 1996 as an important testimony to the role of parliaments in affirming the first of human rights: the right to food for every human being that is born on the planet.

Another important sector of collaboration between the United Nations and parliamentary organs is being promoted by the Secretariat's Department of Economic and Social Affairs, to build capacity for democratic parliamentary institutions. These programmes are also particularly interesting because, *inter alia*, they concern the possibility of regional integration under the banner of democracy and development. In this perspective, I wish to recall the commitment of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs to the Central American Parliament, which is also actively supported by the Italian Parliament and Government.

In closing I would like to underline that Italy welcomes the IPU support for combating child labour through International Labour Organization Convention No. 182 on the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour. We were delighted to hear that the new President of the General Assembly, Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab of Namibia, has made the plight of children, in particular children in armed conflicts, the theme of his Presidency.

Mr. Schloten (Germany): It is with great pleasure that I inform the Assembly that the 102nd Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Conference in Berlin elected a woman to the post of President of the IPU Council. Ms. Heptulla, who is here today, is the first female President in the 110-year history of the IPU.

Cooperation between the United Nations and IPU is a challenge at this turn of the millennium. Accordingly, we, the representatives of national parliaments in the IPU — the only worldwide organization of parliaments — give our full support to the report of the Secretary-General. The goals he set out in the report, whose content has been emphasized in the debate here, are fully shared by IPU parliamentarians, and thus a solid basis has been laid for intensifying our cooperation in the century to come.

Let me stress, however, 10 important points which underline the kinds of difficulties that exist and must be taken into consideration for a fruitful cooperation to develop.

First, parliaments are urged to make the voice of the people heard, thereby imparting a more manifestly democratic dimension to the international decision-making process and exploring new avenues of cooperation. Parliamentarians must initiate efforts to ensure that

democracy based upon the rule of law is the only possible constitutional framework for a member State.

Parliaments should also take initiatives to include parliamentarians from all States Members of the United Nations in the IPU, which currently has 139 members. This would provide us with a great opportunity to strengthen our voice. And we could function even better if all 188 States Members of the United Nations became members of the IPU and thereby participated in the parliamentary world community.

All IPU members deplore the decreased activity of the United States of America. Since the early 1990s no United States delegation has participated in a IPU conference. This is highly regrettable, because the United States has in the past played an important role in the Union. I consider it of the utmost importance that our American colleagues accept our invitation to continue cooperating within the IPU and return to our conferences.

As parliamentarians, we are able to take our national commitments into international forums. Parliamentarians approve national budgets and make available the financial means to discharge international responsibilities. United Nations missions can be implemented only if they are well funded. If we combine national and international efforts on a worldwide scale — IPU parliamentarians for the United Nations — we can arrive at a positive outcome: enhanced cooperation that is better suited than ever to facing new challenges.

Let us also include in our efforts towards an improved cooperation other international parliamentary assemblies such as the European Parliament, the Andean Parliament and the Latin American Parliament, as well as the Council of Europe and the North Atlantic Assembly. We need their input in order to make our views better understood.

IPU is a founding member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) conferences of the IPU held from 1972 to 1991 showed the strong impact IPU has had in contributing to the changes that have occurred. The new democracies in Central and Eastern Europe were able to emerge only because those regimes could not continue to reject democracy and deny people their human rights. Thus IPU contributed to the strengthening of the state on the basis of the rule of law in the emerging democracies, thereby supporting the goals of the United Nations. The cooperation between IPU and the United Nations should include jointly disseminating OSCE ideals to other parts of the world, thus establishing the conditions for stability and democracy.

We must try much harder to implement the results of the resolutions adopted at the IPU conferences. With respect to the resolutions adopted at the 102nd Inter-Parliamentary Conference two weeks ago in Berlin, we followed the lead of, and fully supported, the Secretary-General and the General Assembly.

The 102nd Conference in Berlin showed the need and the will for cooperation. One thousand six hundred representatives from 131 countries came to Berlin and cooperated in the drafting of important resolutions on the promotion of international humanitarian law; on the peaceful coexistence of ethnic, cultural and religious minorities, including migrant populations within a single State; and on the need to revise the current global financial and economic model. This can be considered an important benefit of the relationship between IPU and the United Nations. This cooperation is a very positive factor indeed, as it enhances the value, and works to the benefit, of both institutions.

Parliaments can make a very valuable contribution to supporting programmes that help create a good basis for the work of lawmakers. Such support programmes can include experts from parliaments who either visit parliaments and share their expertise or invite delegations to participate in particular training programmes. Skilled civil servants can support and advise their parliamentarians in the law-making process, and in that way participate in creating conditions for good governance. That goal could well be taken up in East Timor after its full independence.

But let us ask ourselves if we do enough to disseminate our views in order to create optimal conditions for cooperation between national parliaments, IPU and the United Nations. In this respect I wish to mention that the parliamentary groups in the Bundestag submitted a motion on the role of the IPU that calls upon the Federal Government to support IPU in promoting democracy; to contribute to efforts to turn IPU into the parliamentary dimension of the United Nations; and to implement the resolutions adopted at Inter-Parliamentary Conferences, not only in the Federal Republic of Germany but also in the international bodies and institutions of which Germany is a member.

Recent developments have shown that the contribution of parliaments to the content of cooperation with the United Nations can be reinforced and improved. A decisive role can be played within the United Nations not only through traditional diplomacy, but also by the IPU. The voice of parliamentarians worldwide should be heard. At the end of the millennium, this is an area of IPU activity with the potential for further growth and support of United Nations goals, including the new element of parliamentary diplomacy.

Mr. Zmeevski (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation actively advocates the development and consolidation of relations and contacts between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). We are firmly convinced that United Nations reform and the strengthening of its central role in a multipolar world will depend to a large extent on the parliaments of States Members of the Organization, which make a considerable contribution to the development of the foreign policies of States.

We are pleased to note that interaction between the two Organizations is growing and flourishing on a very wide range of matters, from the maintenance of international peace and security to gender issues. This is borne out in the report of the Secretary-General on cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union. The report is a very thorough and comprehensive document, and can serve as an excellent basis for our discussion today, which we hope will further promote improved relations between the two Organizations. Another argument in favour of such a conclusion is the draft resolution before us today. More than 120 countries have sponsored the draft resolution, including the Russian Federation. This very impressive figure speaks for itself and requires no further comment.

As a result of the Parliamentary Support Programme concluded in October 1998 with the United Nations Development Programme, the Inter-Parliamentary Union has been able to continue rendering advisory services and technical assistance at both the international and national levels, which is extremely important for the parliaments of countries that need such assistance. We hope that cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU will be taken to a new level by the recent signature by the IPU of an Agreement of Cooperation with the International Labour Organization and of a Memorandum of Understanding with the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

I should like to recall the significant contribution made to addressing the problems facing the international community by the 100th IPU Conference, which was held in Moscow in September of last year. That world meeting of deputies, which took place in our country for the first time, was not only the most representative in the history of the oldest world union of parliamentarians, but also fostered further and closer inter-parliamentary cooperation in the main areas of United Nations activity.

As the report of the Secretary-General indicates, among the most important results of the Moscow IPU Conference was the decision of parliamentarians to recommend that regional and subregional organizations establish multilateral procedures to evaluate progress in the implementation of national strategies to combat the world drug problem. The active participation of Russian parliamentarians in the activities of the IPU have strengthened the Union and enhanced its capacities. The President of the national Duma of the Federal Assembly, Mr. G. N. Seleznev, is a member of the Preparatory Committee for the Conference of Presiding Officers of National Parliaments, which is to be held in August and September 2000 at United Nations Headquarters here in New York.

The development of inter-parliamentary cooperation and the broader involvement and interaction of the IPU with the United Nations system should be viewed as an important resource for the Organization. Actively tapping the potential of civil society, first and foremost its inter-parliamentary sector, should contribute greatly to the democratization of international relations, which will be an inalienable component of the world of the twenty-first century. That is one of the tasks identified by the President of the Russian Federation, Mr. Yeltsin, in his initiative to develop a concept of peace for the twenty-first century. The purpose of that initiative is the creation of a new culture of peace that would include the development of a system of values and behavioural models in which the highest priority for peoples would be a peaceful world, free of conflict, and the creation of conditions conducive to the establishment and maintenance of peace. Recourse to parliamentary diplomacy will help the United Nations, through the participation of elected representatives, to hear more clearly the voice of the people and to see old problems in new ways. The incipient organizational and structural transformation of the IPU into a genuine union of parliaments of the entire world, and the adaptation of its agenda to the whole range of issues addressed by the United Nations, will help to enhance the role of the

United Nations itself, endowing it with a new parliamentary dimension.

In conclusion, allow me to express my conviction that strengthening cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU will help to resolve the global tasks confronting humanity on the threshold of the new century and the new millennium.

Mr. Tabone (Malta): At the outset, I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report contained in document A/54/379, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union". Malta shares the view expressed on this issue by the Secretary-General and by other delegations, that the political objectives and aims of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) are commendable as they reinforce the noble goals set forth in the Charter of the United Nations.

The increasing cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU is illustrated by the fact that over the past year the IPU has signed both an Agreement of Cooperation with the International Labour Organization and a Memorandum of Understanding with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. Malta welcomes and applauds both these initiatives. It firmly believes that such agreements further consolidate the healthy working relationship between the United Nations and the IPU. As rightly pointed out by the Secretary-General in his report, the IPU Liaison Office with the United Nations has contributed significantly to this enhanced cooperation.

The Secretary-General's report contains a considerable number of important issues which have been under discussion within the framework of cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU. It would be remiss on our part not to commend the participation of the IPU during the United Nations Diplomatic Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Establishment of an International Criminal Court. My delegation welcomes the call made during the IPU's 100th Conference, held in September 1998, urging parliaments to exert all their influence with the aim of encouraging the rapid signing and ratification process of the Rome Statute of the Court.

Moreover, my delegation attributes particular importance to the world drug problem, as referred to in paragraph 11 of the Secretary-General's report. It is encouraging to note that the 1998 Moscow IPU Conference addressed the issue of the consumption and illicit trafficking of drugs and organized crime in the context of the follow-up to the twentieth special session of the General Assembly, on the world drug problem. My delegation views favourably the recommendations whereby the Assembly and regional and subregional organizations would establish multilateral procedures to evaluate the progress of national strategies. This kind of interrelation between the two institutions is intended to stimulate greater international sensitivity to this global scourge afflicting our societies, particularly our young people.

Malta looks forward to participating in the Conference of Presiding Officers of National Parliaments, which is to be held at United Nations Headquarters next year in conjunction with the Millennium Assembly. Indeed, that Conference can be a major milestone for the IPU. It will serve, *inter alia*, as a channel to convey to each national parliament a better understanding of the work of the United Nations. Acquainting parliamentarians with the decisions and recommendations debated on a daily basis in the various General Assembly committees would certainly generate more effective follow-up on these issues at the national political level. Parliamentarians would, moreover, be better placed to transmit to their constituencies the work of the United Nations, be it of a sensitive political nature or merely of a technical nature. In turn, this would contribute to creating a positive awareness of the business of the United Nations amongst our citizens.

In its participation at IPU conferences, Malta has through the years consistently voiced its firm conviction that a specific initiative for the Mediterranean region warrants particular attention by the IPU. Eventually, the inter-parliamentary process for security and cooperation in the Mediterranean (CSCM) was established. In defining the CSCM process at its 1991 session, the Inter-Parliamentary Council stated that:

> "The CSCM [process] should enable the Mediterranean region to be not a place of antagonisms but a meeting place where, in a climate of security and stability, a genuine cultural dialogue and a partnership designed to ensure the balanced growth of the area can develop. The CSCM [process] should not aim at providing a solution to conflicts tackled directly, but should be a permanent mechanism for dialogue and negotiations whereby at each meeting progress is made in the common definition of principles and methods of action".

At the first CSCM Conference, held in Malaga in 1992, Malta reiterated its proposal in favour of creating a Council for the Mediterranean on the lines of the Council of Europe. Subsequently, during the second CSCM Conference, held in 1995 in Valletta, Malta, that proposal was further developed, and the Maltese Government proposed the establishment of an Association of Mediterranean States. That Association would provide an appropriate institutional mechanism that would permit enhanced cooperation among Mediterranean countries and help us generate greater stability, allowing a security regime to be finally and firmly established in the Mediterranean. In the light of that proposal, the States members of the CSCM, in the final document of the Valletta Conference, recommended

> "the creation of an association of Mediterranean States, open to all the Mediterranean coastal countries and to those countries whose destiny is directly linked to that Sea, according to modalities to be defined".

Malta envisages the creation of such a permanent forum, which would help develop and reinforce political cooperation among peoples of the Mediterranean, a forum where politicians would meet regularly to discuss problems in the region, evaluate the difficulties encountered, explore the potentialities of existing cooperation and map out common political objectives. Malta has offered its facilities to host such a parliamentary partnership, believing that its geostrategic position has the potential to serve as a meeting place for the active involvement of parliaments in this partnership process.

In conclusion, Malta would like to reiterate its satisfaction at seeing ever-stronger cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU; it is our hope that this cooperation will be further enhanced in the years ahead. In contributing to the achievement of that goal, Malta has once again joined in sponsoring the draft resolution relating to cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union, which we hope will shortly be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Del Picchia (France) (*spoke in French*): I am pleased to address the General Assembly on behalf of the French delegation on the agenda item entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union". My delegation welcomes the report of the Secretary-General submitted pursuant to resolution 53/13 of 28 October 1998. The report takes comprehensive stock of the activities carried out and the resolutions adopted by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) as part of its coordinated and effective support for the work of the United Nations in its principal areas of authority, including peace and security, human rights and economic and social development.

France is a sponsor of the draft resolution before the Assembly, introduced this year by the delegation of India. We have no doubt that like past texts on the subject it will be adopted by consensus.

France hails the effective work of the Preparatory Committee for the Conference of Presiding Officers of National Parliaments which is to be held at United Nations Headquarters from 30 August to 1 September 2000, in conjunction with the Millennium Assembly. I am able to announce today that France will be represented at that conference at the highest level of both houses of its legislature.

The French and British sections of the IPU are working together on a draft statement focusing on a charter for a revitalized Inter-Parliamentary Union.

My delegation is pleased that draft resolution A/54/L.9 envisions the possibility of reporting to the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session on the outcome of the Conference of Presiding Officers of National Parliaments.

The close cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union, which grows deeper and broader every year, exemplifies a particular approach to international relations on the threshold of the new millennium. I recall that it was a French deputy, Frédéric Passy, who joined a British Member of Parliament in 1889 to conceive the idea of creating the Union, which was intended from the outset to work to realize the ideal of peace among peoples and among nations.

Cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU is based on the idea that the recommendations, measures and standards issued by the United Nations must be recognized, understood and implemented by the elected representatives of the peoples that make up the community of nations. Conversely, it is based also on the idea that the representatives of nations should have the opportunity to inform the United Nations of the hopes and aspirations of the men and women they represent.

In a world that has grown more interdependent and globalized, national parliaments must be heard in the United Nations, and the United Nations must keep

citizens and populations informed about the measures it adopts and the goals it pursues. The Inter-Parliamentary Union thus has an irreplaceable role as a national relay station for the great debates that take place on the world scene, thus facilitating such matters as the national ratification of treaties negotiated at the international level.

France welcomes the recent Agreement of Cooperation between the IPU and the International Labour Organization signed in May 1999, and the Memorandum of Understanding signed in July with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. These are concrete examples of this cooperation.

Through the two houses of its legislature, France naturally plays a very active role in the work of the Inter-Parliamentary Union. In December 1998, on the initiative of the French Government and of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Paris was host to a commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which took place in the presence of representatives of the Inter-Parliamentary Union. In Marseille, from 30 March to 3 April 2000, my country will also host the final thematic meeting of the preparatory process for the third IPU Conference on Security and Cooperation in the Mediterranean. The session will begin with a meeting of women parliamentarians.

France participated in the 100th Inter-Parliamentary Conference, held at Moscow in September 1998, and was involved in the drafting of a resolution urging Governments to ratify the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction.

France is pleased with the results of the cooperation between the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the United Nations. International humanitarian law, the global economic and financial model and the rights of minorities within a State are some of the central considerations of the French group in the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

The French National Assembly and Senate, through the 50 representatives and the 50 senators who represent France at the Inter-Parliamentary Union fully support the objectives of cooperation between the two organizations and welcome the increasing progress achieved. Our representatives are committed to giving the work that supports and extends the initiatives of the United Nations the follow-up required for them to be disseminated and for their recommendations to be effectively applied. France considers that technical parliamentary assistance in support of international programmes launched under the auspices of the United Nations or at the initiative of our parliaments to cultivate new normative fields is a new and modern form of action, appropriate for international cooperation at the dawn of a new century.

Mr. Kozyr (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): I am compelled to depart from my prepared statement in order to express my condolences to the families bereaved as a result of the terrorist action in Armenia. Among the victims were some of my dear friends.

Turning to the subject of this session, first of all, on behalf of our National Assembly, the Parliament of the Republic of Belarus, I would like to join those who have expressed gratitude and appreciation to the organizers of this year's meeting on the Inter-Parliamentary Union at the United Nations. We are convinced that this forum will contribute to strengthening the contacts between parliamentarians of different countries and promoting cooperation between the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the United Nations, thus helping us achieve better mutual understanding.

I would also like to congratulate you, Sir, in your capacity as President and gratefully recall your interesting statement during our meeting on 25 October 1999.

The delegation of the National Assembly of Belarus has carefully studied the report of the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union." We support the efforts of the Secretary-General aimed at extending the interaction between the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the United Nations, and we endorse the draft resolution on this subject.

Belarus fully supports the idea of further rapprochement between the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the United Nations, as they are two of the most influential contemporary organizations having universal significance.

The meeting between parliamentarians and the United Nations held on 25 October highlighted numerous problems and made it clear that there was a need to coordinate the efforts of national parliaments, the Inter-Parliamentary Union and United Nations in order to resolve them. These relate to sovereignty, human rights, the activities of the International Criminal Court and the question of sanctions.

The most recent developments in the international arena have shown that the questions of State sovereignty and human rights are going to gain more and more importance. The members of the Parliament of Belarus support the need to have a comprehensive discussion and analysis of the concept of so-called humanitarian intervention. We consider the General Assembly the most appropriate forum, with its equal and sovereign representation of Member States, for further discussion of this matter. In our view, it might be necessary to create a special open-ended working group in the framework of the General Assembly with the mandate of conducting an open and comprehensive discussion of this issue and elaborating criteria to define the legal conditions of the interrelationship between human rights and the principle of State sovereignty. The determination of those criteria would certainly facilitate the process of finding solutions to acute world crises and prevent new conflicts.

The National Assembly of Belarus is following with particular interest the processes of elaborating a legal framework for the International Criminal Court. The idea of establishing that body undoubtedly corresponds to the most urgent demands of our time. At a certain stage of its creation, however, the Statute of the Court gave the general impression — and Belarusian public opinion is no exception in this regard — that the Court was to be a new coercive organ with practically unlimited power. This, particularly, could explain some of the delays in ratification of that document by the national parliaments of those countries that have signed the Statute.

We noted with interest the ideas expressed on 25 October by Mr. Sergio Vieira de Mello, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, about a possible expansion of the Court's competencies into the areas of advisory assistance, expert consideration of national legislation and training of specialists in the field of national legislation. The Court's ability to assume these new tasks could, in our view, make it more attractive to the international community and facilitate the Statute's ratification by national legislators.

We consider the issue of sanctions a most important area in which national parliaments and the United Nations could have significant cooperation. Today we are witnessing the unquestionable fact that sanctions are used as an instrument of coercive diplomacy and are losing their effectiveness. Their negative impact often has humanitarian consequences. We share the opinions expressed by some parliamentarians about the possibility of reviewing the mechanism for the imposition of sanctions in order to adapt it better to present realities.

The National Assembly of the Republic of Belarus highly values the activities of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). We welcome the election of Mr. Mark Malloch Brown to the post of the UNDP Administrator and hope that this will give more opportunities for and significant new impetus to the process of further developing activities aimed at increasing the Programme's effectiveness. Bearing this in mind, on 20 October 1999, the Lower House of the Belarusian Parliament ratified an agreement on the participation of Belarus in UNDP activities.

As one of the founding States of the United Nations and an active member of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the Republic of Belarus will make the maximum effort to strengthen cooperation between the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the United Nations. We are one of the sponsors of the draft resolution on this item, and we hope that it will be adopted today.

Tribute to the memory of His Excellency Mr. Vazgen Sargissian, late Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia

The President: I should like to inform the Assembly that I have received information from the Permanent Mission of Armenia to the United Nations. Today, about 5 p.m. local time, five gunmen stormed the Parliamentary Sessions Chamber of the Republic of Armenia and opened fire.

According to this information, Prime Minister Vazgen Sargissian, as well as the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of Parliament and a Minister, were killed.

We must all condemn this dastardly act of terrorism.

It is my sad duty to pay tribute to the memory of the late Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia, His Excellency Mr. Vazgen Sargissian, and of other dignitaries, who met with tragic death today.

On behalf of the General Assembly, I request the representative of Armenia to convey our deep condolences to the Government and the people of Armenia and to the bereaved family of His Excellency Mr. Vazgen Sargissian, as well as to the families of the other senior Government officials.

I invite representatives to stand and observe a minute of silence in tribute to the memory of His Excellency Mr. Vazgen Sargissian and his fellow victims.

The members of the General Assembly observed a minute of silence.

The President: At this time, we understand that the gunmen are still holding about 50 members of the Parliament and of the Government hostage. I strongly appeal for the immediate release of all hostages and for an immediate end to this tragic situation.

Agenda item 27 (*continued*)

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union

Report of the Secretary-General (A/54/379)

Draft resolution (A/54/L.9)

Mr. **Kafando** (Burkina Faso) (*spoke in French*): First of all, on behalf of my delegation and through you, Sir, I would like to express to the Government and the people of Armenia our sincere condolences and sympathy for the tragedy that has just afflicted them.

Turning to the item before us, my delegation would like to begin by congratulating the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for the excellent report submitted to us for consideration.

Burkina Faso, a member of the Executive Committee of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), is pleased by the diligent implementation of last year's Assembly resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union, resolution 53/13.

The report before us has the primary merit of being both concise and complete, and thus its utility is incontrovertible. Its description of many cooperative activities that the two institutions have carried out so well makes it possible to better gauge how much the United Nations can gain by working more closely with the IPU, which brings together elected representatives of the peoples whom Governments are supposed to serve. The advantages of this cooperation are attested to by the near universal satisfaction reflected in the Secretary-General's report. And this satisfaction also supports the Secretary-General's decision to accord special importance to contacts with parliaments, in order to give a parliamentary dimension to the work of the United Nations.

The promotion of peace and security, democracy, good governance, women, and development in all its aspects, including public health: these are all ongoing priorities of our Organization. And the IPU makes concrete contributions to these efforts through the framework for mobilization, public awareness and action that the national parliaments provide.

In our view, the most significant message of the report is the acknowledgement that globalization of human relations — be they political, economic or socio-cultural — and of international cooperation requires a diligent and in-depth adaptation of the United Nations so that it will have the means to play its central role in the international assembly of nations.

Thus my delegation would like to reaffirm its unshakeable support for the initiatives already taken and for those contemplated by the Secretary-General in this sphere. Is not reform of the Organization the Secretary-General's favourite subject? We must in fact encourage the involvement of all organized structures — be they governmental or of civil society — that can help the United Nations fulfil, with maximal effectiveness, its mandates in the various spheres of human activity. In this instance, the Organization's cooperation with the Inter-Parliamentary Union deserves effective support and expansion, as the work already done augurs so well for the future.

As far as my delegation is concerned, it cannot be otherwise. At the close of the twentieth century, parliamentary diplomacy is playing a growing role. And this role is consistent with the nature of parliamentary institutions — that is, with their principal legislative function and their role in regulating the executive and in the development of social policy. A State's foreign policy would not properly reflect the political, economic and social realities of that State if it ignored the contributions of these elected representatives. It is thus simply for parliamentarians to show how their initiatives are specific to them and how, rather than replacing the foreign policy of Government Administrations, they complement and reinforce it.

The Inter-Parliamentary Union has demonstrated its readiness and capacity to assist the United Nations in the successful fulfilment of its mandate to help peoples. Thus my delegation expresses its strong desire to see the

General Assembly accede by consensus to the request parliamentarians have submitted in the form of the draft resolution which has been sponsored by many of the Member States, Burkina Faso included.

Before concluding, allow me to congratulate Mrs. Najima Heptulla on her election to the presidency of the Inter-Parliamentary Council. I wish her every success in her work.

Mr. Suh (Republic of Korea): At the outset, I wish, on behalf of the Government and the people of the Republic of Korea, to join previous speakers in extending our deepest condolences to the Government and the people of Armenia regarding today's tragic incident.

Future historians will describe the twentieth century as a journey towards freedom and democracy and away from oppression and dictatorship. Indeed, it is encouraging to see that many parts of the world are now embracing the sweeping wave of democratization as we approach the new millennium. The trend towards freedom and democracy can be accelerated if we carefully nurture its growth in a common effort.

Representative democracy in particular has been the defining characteristic of this trend. Since its inception in 1889, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) has been a forerunner in the promotion of democracy. It is our sincere hope that the IPU will serve the world's citizens more faithfully in its capacity as their representative organ as representative democracy continues to spread.

To ensure the success of any democratic society, it is imperative that Governments and their activities be accountable and transparent to the people they represent. Cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU can contribute to enhancing this accountability and transparency of Governments, since the United Nations is the collective body of government while the IPU represents the collective will of the people.

Another important feature of democratization is the role of non-governmental organizations in contributing to government activities. The role of non-governmental organizations and other agencies of civil society in tackling global issues is likely to expand substantially in the near future. As the Secretary-General pointed out in his remarks to a meeting of parliamentarians two days ago, one of the happier consequences of globalization is a novel sense of global citizenship and shared responsibility among all sectors of civil society.

As parliaments bridge the gap between government and civil society in most countries, the IPU can play a similar role by linking global issues to local concerns. Herein lies the necessity of facilitating cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU.

Cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU is indispensable, as it can enhance people's understanding of and support for the United Nations by relaying the Organization's decisions and recommendations more efficiently to the national political level. In this context, we note with satisfaction that cooperation between the two international bodies is being reinforced on the basis of the agreement of cooperation signed in 1996. In particular, we are pleased to note that the now well-established IPU Liaison Office with the United Nations has successfully carried out its role of imparting a parliamentary dimension to the work of the world body.

Furthermore, my delegation welcomes the signing by the IPU of an Agreement of Cooperation with the International Labour Organization this past May and a Memorandum of Understanding with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in July. These initiatives merit our full support, as they represent concrete gestures towards the goal of cooperation. It is our hope that the IPU will sign additional agreements of cooperation with other bodies of the United Nations system, whereby it can convey norms and decisions formulated at the global level to the national level. It is noteworthy that the IPU and the United Nations have been making a concerted effort to address today's global challenges, such as environmental degradation and the illegal drug trade, as illustrated in the report of the Secretary-General.

We are satisfied that the preparation process for the Conference of Presiding Officers of National Parliaments has been going smoothly and that it has been arranged to take place just before the Millennium Assembly next year. It is our hope that the IPU will have the chance to report directly to the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session the outcome of the Presiding Officers Conference. Doing so will help the Millennium Assembly to draw a more enlightened blueprint for the United Nations in the twenty-first century. Even after the Millennium Assembly, support from national parliaments will further facilitate the implementation of the Assembly's outcomes.

My Government has co-sponsored the draft resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union in the belief that the United Nations and the IPU have a joint mission to render prosperity, peace and democracy universal in the next century. My delegation is grateful to India for its introduction of the draft resolution, which we hope will be adopted by consensus.

Korean Parliamentarians have actively participated in the activities of the IPU by serving on its Executive Committee and assuming the vice-presidency of the Inter-Parliamentary Conference. The Republic of Korea is also committed to creating an environment beneficial to United Nations-IPU cooperation.

Let me conclude by expressing my delegation's wish for a successful Conference of Presiding Officers next year. Our common cause of encouraging the spread of democracy demands that we continue to seek new avenues of cooperation.

Mr. Hynes (Canada) (*spoke in French*): Canada is a sponsor of the draft resolution before the Assembly on Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). The presence here of the President of the Canadian contingent of the Union, Sheila Finestone, together with other Canadian parliamentarians, underlines the importance that we attach to this issue.

(*spoke in English*)

The Government of Canada and the entire Canadian delegation join all members of the Assembly in conveying their condolences to and solidarity with the Government and the people of Armenia in connection with the tragic events that you, Sir, have related to us.

As outlined in the report of the Secretary-General, over the last year the Inter-Parliamentary Union has continued, and indeed strengthened, its tradition of marshalling the support of parliamentarians worldwide for the work of the United Nations. Canada particularly welcomes the contribution the Inter-Parliamentary Union has made to several major initiatives aimed at strengthening international peace and security and enhancing the human security of people of the world.

The IPU's advocacy of early ratification of the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction and its encouragement of signature and ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty are but two examples of the positive role that the IPU and its members can play in this regard and in establishing and securing respect for international regimes to make our world a safer place. The IPU's encouragement of state signatures and parliamentary ratifications of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court is also most welcome and contributes importantly to the growing international momentum in support of the early establishment of the Court.

The Secretary-General's excellent report identifies numerous other areas where the IPU has assumed an active role in promoting the United Nations efforts to better the lives of the people of the world. It also offers some useful suggestions on ways of strengthening future cooperation between our two organizations.

Canada especially looks forward to the Conference of Presiding Officers of National Parliaments, which the IPU is organizing to be held in conjunction with the United Nations Millennium Assembly. We believe that this important event will significantly complement our millennium proceedings. Presiding officers of national parliaments are extremely well positioned to engage members of their respective parliaments in the challenges our Organization faces in fulfilling its responsibilities, and as the Secretary-General has noted, this Conference of Presiding Officers also offers a valuable opportunity to explore ways to strengthen cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU. We would hope that an opportunity can be found for the IPU to present the conclusions of that Conference to the Millennium Assembly next year.

To conclude these brief remarks, let me simply reiterate that Canada greatly values the existing cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union, and we are committed to strengthening further the collaboration between the two organizations in support of our shared objectives. We trust that the consensus adoption of the draft resolution before us this afternoon will mark an important step in that direction.

Mr. Fonseca (Brazil): Let me begin by expressing the condolences of the Brazilian delegation to the Government and the people of Armenia. We deeply regret the tragic event and would like to join your appeal for an immediate release of the remaining hostages.

Brazil takes special satisfaction in participating in the debate on the cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). For 110 years now the IPU has contributed to fostering contacts and promoting the exchange of experiences among parliamentarians of all countries. Parliaments are about society and democracy, negotiation and understanding.

In the performance of its mandate, the IPU has shown over the years that it shares the goals of the United Nations. From peace and security to human rights, from environmental concerns to economic and social development, the IPU truly helps in a significant way the intensification of dialogue among societies and nations and thus contributes in a relevant way to the objectives of the United Nations.

For Brazil, the IPU is an important reference. The participation of parliamentary observers in the General Assembly is a long-standing tradition for us. Together with the IPU meetings, this provides an opportunity for Brazilian congressmen to interact with colleagues from all over the world.

This is a natural consequence of a world made ever smaller, but also of close interaction between domestic and international issues. I will give but a handful of examples. In the economic field Brazil's international trade profile and the integration of the economies of Latin America — particularly the Southern Cone Common Market (MERCOSUR) initiative — are in fact issues that became matters of everyday attention for Brazilian congressmen. In the political and legal field, Brazil's international commitments to disarmament and non-proliferation, as well as our participation in the negotiations leading to the creation of the International Criminal Court, also make for matters of lively interest to Brazil's Congress.

We must note that this clearly represents more than just the constitutional role ascribed to Congress as the instance of approval of international treaties signed by Brazil. It indeed shows that society's elected representatives in Congress are actively engaged in helping to shape Brazil's role in the international system of the third millennium.

In this connection, we look forward to the Conference of Presiding Officers of National Parliaments to be held in New York next year. It will certainly be an extraordinary addition to the activities to be held under the auspices of the Millennium Assembly.

Brazil is a cosponsor of the draft resolution before us today. We express our conviction that the United Nations and the IPU will be much more efficient instruments to the benefit of the international community in the coming millennium if their cooperation is further strengthened and enhanced.

Mr. Petrella (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour of addressing this Assembly of illustrious parliamentarians to express Argentina's support for the draft resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), introduced by the delegation of India.

This is also an opportunity to thank the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi Annan, and the Secretary General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, Mr. Anders Johnsson, for their efforts to strengthen and increase channels of cooperation between the two institutions. Much has been achieved since the agreement of cooperation was signed in July 1996. At the institutional level, we note the Agreement of Cooperation between the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the International Labour Organization (ILO), signed in May, as well as the Memorandum of Understanding signed with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in July 1999. These agreements reflect the growing commitment of parliaments to defending the principles of the Charter and to defending and promoting development.

In his report, the Secretary-General highlights the decisive action of the IPU in the field of disarmament, national implementation of standards of humanitarian law, the establishment of the International Criminal Court and the fight against the illicit consumption of and trafficking in drugs and against organized crime. In order to achieve concrete progress in these fields we increasingly require international cooperation, and Governments must coordinate their efforts. In this regard, the commitment of parliaments is vital.

The Secretary-General's report also examines the role played by the Inter-Parliamentary Union in efforts for peace in certain conflict situations, such as the cases of Cyprus or the Middle East, as well as its participation in initiatives of the United Nations and its various organs in strengthening institutions, promotion of human rights, promotion of the rights of women and children, sustainable development and food security. This is certainly a hopeful picture, and it clearly illustrates the role of the IPU as a forum for dialogue of the world's

parliaments in building a better and more just world for the new millennium.

These actions must be strengthened and increased. To that end, Argentina, as a member of the executive board of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, places many hopes in the outcome of the Conference of Presiding Officers of National Parliaments, to be held next year here at Headquarters, at the same time as the Millennium Assembly. That Conference will undoubtedly serve to assess the progress made up to then and to engage even more the parliamentarians of the world, as representatives of the most diverse interests, cultures, sensibilities and ideologies, in building a world more appropriate for all individuals.

If any institution embodies our modern idea of democracy, it is the parliament. The very existence of a legislature, where all sectors of society are represented and where minorities can make their voices heard, ensures that the norms to govern a given community will be dictated by all its members. Thus, it is generally understood that the work of the parliament consists of defending the interests of each member of society by achieving a consensus translated into common goals and action. The modern parliament is synonymous with dialogue, negotiation, consensus, respect for diversity and the search for common objectives.

The commitment of national parliaments to international realities awakens the greatest hopes. Parliaments are the best instruments of democracy to transmit to their respective societies the need that common problems be resolved among all. Today, perhaps more today than ever, nothing human can be foreign to us.

In regard for the Inter-Parliamentary Union and in fulfilling its commitments as a member of the executive board, the Argentine Republic cosponsors this draft resolution, introduced by the delegation of India, and calls on all Members of the Organization to adopt it by consensus.

Mr. Ray (Australia): Australia is pleased to give its support to agenda item 27. Both the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) have clearly demarcated responsibilities, yet many of the issues they deal with are the same. International problems know no boundaries.

Essentially, the United Nations is a convocation of Governments. In contrast, the Inter-Parliamentary Union represents parliaments and includes the points of view of Governments, oppositions and minority parties. A key role of the United Nations has always been to negotiate and implement international treaties and conventions. The pace at which these matters can be dealt with often relies on how quickly national parliaments can exercise their powers. Some parliaments, of course, can negate international treaties. But nearly all parliaments are required to legislate to give effect to international treaties.

The relationship between international agreements and domestic law is always complex. Given the detailed consideration needed to ensure that international agreements and domestic laws are consistent, it is not surprising that long delays occur, much to the frustration of everyone. Closer links between the United Nations and the IPU may do much to lessen the time between agreement and a legislative solution. Even after all this has been achieved, one can never guarantee that the judiciary of each country will find the international agreement and the domestic legislative solution compatible, and the whole process has to start again. This is not the time for a critique of judicial activism, but at some stage judicial interpretation of international agreements should be discussed.

The twentieth century has been marked more by rivalry than cooperation between international organizations. The recent trend towards cooperation between the IPU and the United Nations is refreshing and is a credit to the office-holders of both organizations. Anything Australia can do to assist in these developments will be forthcoming.

We argue that linkages between the IPU and the United Nations must be retained and strengthened. The IPU provides the United Nations with a window into the deliberations of law-makers of its member States. Equally, the United Nations provides these same law-makers within the IPU with a window into the activities of the United Nations. In dealing with short-term domestic politics, it is all too easy to overlook the wider universal ideals for which the United Nations stands and which ultimately must form the basis for our laws and policies. Hence, the linkages between the IPU and the United Nations help to ensure that we parliamentarians continue to reflect the ideals of the United Nations within our national arenas, and that we continue to act as influential supporters of the work and objectives of the United Nations in our national parliaments.

Mr. Benítez Sáenz (Uruguay)(*spoke in Spanish*): The theme of cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) always is especially relevant and topical to the delegation of Uruguay. A great deal of progress has been achieved since 1995, when General Assembly resolution 50/15 entrusted to the Secretary-General the task of taking the necessary means to bring about a cooperation agreement between the two organizations.

On the one hand, within a clear-cut legal framework, a cooperation agreement between the United Nations and the IPU was signed by the United Nations Secretary-General, the President of the Inter-Parliamentary Council and the Secretary General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union. This agreement, based on the promotion of international cooperation and the solution of problems of a political, economic, social, cultural or humanitarian nature, is designed to promote respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. Different mechanisms for cooperation and consultation to achieve these objectives should make it possible, in some cases, to go so far as to adopt joint measures and programmes.

A number of joint meetings have been held since the signing of the cooperation agreement in July 1996. One of the most important was the meeting on complementary measures of the World Summit on Social Development, jointly organized by the IPU, the United Nations Secretariat's Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in order to analyze the concrete measures and provisions that national parliaments should adopt in order to complement and implement decisions and recommendations of the Copenhagen Summit.

We have carefully analyzed the Secretary-General's report contained in document A/54/379, and we are very grateful for the way it is presented. In our opinion, it is a detailed account of initiatives to bring about cooperation in the spheres of peace and security, social and economic development, international law, human rights, democracy, gender issues and good governance.

We take note of the preparations being carried out for the Conference of Presiding Officers of National Parliaments, to be held from 30 August to 1 September here in New York in conjunction with the Millennium Assembly.

At a time when certain sectors of public opinion in our countries are sceptical about this Organization's effectiveness in honouring and eliciting respect for the principles enshrined in the Charter, we believe it is of fundamental importance for representatives of freely elected parliaments to join forces and cooperate to ensure that the United Nations not remain some distant and detached theoretical model, but instead that it become something very close to our peoples, so that it can depend on their understanding and respect and, finally, their support.

This is why, when it comes to promoting peace and security, we consider the analysis, among other things, of the topics of disarmament, including the prohibition of nuclear testing and of antipersonnel mines, to be positive. We would be happy if in this domain it were also possible to analyze the importance of monitoring and regulating the transport of radioactive waste because of the sensitive impact this activity has on the environment in our countries in case of any spill or maritime accident that might occur on the high seas. In case of an accident at sea, currents could spread the adverse effects throughout the environment and could affect the economy of one or more States.

In analyzing the cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU, we would especially like to highlight and support everything relating to the promotion of democracy.

Programmes presently being carried out with the support of UNDP will make it possible to enjoy the best of what our own experience and knowledge has to offer in bringing about and improving the operation and enlargement of representative democratic institutions.

Uruguay's Parliament, and the Parliament soon to be elected, have followed and will continue to follow with interest developments and progress on these topics. At the regional and subregional levels, Uruguayan parliamentary delegations have, for their part, been giving priority to all the issues tackled by the Latin American Parliament.

The Southern Cone Common Market (MERCOSUR) has also been aware of the importance of the presence of a parliamentary body in all issues concerning international relations. The Joint Parliamentary Commission was established within MERCOSUR as a body of the Ouro Preto Protocol to bring about the

inclusion and participation of parliaments on MERCOSUR's regional agenda.

Finally, we would like to thank the delegation of India for its efforts in coordinating and promoting the draft resolution on the item before us. We are in a position to announce that we will co-sponsor this draft resolution.

Mr. El-Remeisy (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me, Sir, to extend our most sincere condolences through you to the Government and people of Armenia for the abhorrent incident that we heard of this afternoon and that resulted in the deaths of the Prime Minister and several parliamentarians.

I would also like to extend to you, Sir, our warmest congratulations on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at a time when the world is preparing to usher in a new millennium and is waiting for us to exert greater and more sincere efforts to achieve international cooperation, a cooperation that reinforces a culture of dialogue among all nations by creating new mechanisms that would rise to the level of the developments in the new international order that would bring about international peace, security, social justice and stability.

I also have the honour to express proudly our satisfaction with the efforts of the previous President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), Mr. Ahmed Sorour, the Speaker of Egypt's national assembly, who emphasized the importance of international parliamentary cooperation, as parliamentarians express the hopes and pains of their peoples. I would also like to express my gratitude to the Secretary-General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and his aides. I also want to express my appreciation to you, Sir, to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and to the new President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

Egypt would like to express its support for the draft resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU. I hope it will be adopted by consensus and will have the backing of all international institutions during this time of increasing challenges and risks.

There is no doubt that the new developments in the international community have placed greater burdens and responsibilities on the United Nations at a time when it is taking on a more effective role in enhancing international peace and security. Perhaps the most serious challenges confronting the United Nations are related to the growing seriousness of non-military sources of international instability in the socio-economic, humanitarian and environmental spheres. To this must be added the growing number of hotbeds of tension and conflict between and within States, the growing risk of outbreaks of ethnic, tribal and sectarian conflicts, greater risks of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons, increased stockpiles of conventional weapons and the growth of terrorism as an international phenomenon that threatens democracy, human rights and international peace and security.

Egyptian parliamentarians are of the view that the effectiveness of the United Nations in facing these challenges is limited to the following elements.

First, there is a need to foster the development role of the United Nations. This is crucial to addressing the root causes of national, ethnic and religious conflicts. Providing urgent humanitarian assistance, safeguarding its delivery to the victims of conflict and bringing war criminals to trial are cardinal tasks that constitute an integral part of restoring stability and security to areas of conflict.

The second element is the fair and objective enforcement of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations in cases of violations of international peace and security, without discrimination or double standards. The application of the provisions of the Charter to certain violations of international peace and security and not to similar cases is one of the obvious weaknesses that has harmed the credibility of the Organization in the last few years.

The third element is the need for the General Assembly to adopt clear-cut resolutions on reform proposals that reflect general international consensus reached through serious governmental, parliamentary dialogue having the highest degree of transparency, effectiveness and responsibility.

The fourth element requires that action be taken to rationalize the use of the veto. Any resolution to bring about changes in the number of members or in the regional distribution of membership in the Security Council must invariably be subject to the provisions of Article 108 of the Charter. The Egyptian delegation would like to emphasize the importance of reviewing the principle of rotation of membership and of achieving agreement on the standards that specify permanent membership.

The fifth element is the need to strengthen efforts to improve the performance of the Conference on Disarmament as the sole forum for multilateral disarmament negotiations. There should be a reconsideration of its agenda, expansion of its membership and giving priority to its agenda, emphasizing non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, adoption of confidence-building measures and prohibition of nuclear tests.

The sixth element is the need to stress the improvement of the administrative and financial organization of peacekeeping operations. Moreover, there is the need to enhance the special fund established to support these operations, and to urge Member States to increase their contributions to peacekeeping operations. Special attention should be given to protecting United Nations forces in the light of their exposure to various attacks in conflict areas.

The seventh element is the need for the United Nations to give special attention in the future to updating the mechanisms necessary to resuscitate and advance the North-South dialogue in the framework of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, which was adopted in the mid-1960's. In this connection, we would like to emphasize the need to buttress the development efforts undertaken by the United Nations development funds and to coordinate strategies on assistance to developing countries.

We realize that the United Nations alone cannot find solutions to all the problems in the international arena. Yet, through cooperation with regional organizations, the United Nations can achieve some sort of decentralization and sharing of responsibilities. This will in turn allow it to grapple with many disputes while permitting it to give greater attention to fulfilling its responsibilities with regard to pressing international issues in the light of the new international reality.

Finally, I would like to express my hope that international cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union will succeed with the care and attention of the General Assembly.

Mr. Moushoutas (Cyprus): Before commencing my short statement, I should like to express my sincerest condolences to the Government and people of Armenia on the tragedy that has befallen that country and its long-suffering people.

It is an honour for me to address the General Assembly on the item "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union". National parliaments are centres of democracy and ensurers of good governance in their respective countries. In the international arena, through the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), they are promoters of world peace and justice and staunch supporters of the United Nations Charter and international law.

The Cyprus Parliament, a member of IPU, has played, and continues to play, an active role in the work of the organization, and its members participate in the work of the committees, thus promoting its lofty goals.

The people of Cyprus have repeatedly been moved by the fair and principled declarations and resolutions of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, an organization that they consider to be a citadel of enlightened progress and a greenhouse of global leadership for a more equitable world.

Draft resolution A/54/L.9 — introduced by the Permanent Representative of India, Ambassador Sharma — of which Cyprus is a sponsor, contains the elements necessary for a closer, multifaceted cooperation between the United Nations — the world's most prestigious parliament, as you very correctly called it, Mr. President — and the Inter-Parliamentary Union. It deserves our unanimous support.

Before leaving the rostrum, may I also extend my warmest congratulations to the President of the Inter-Parliamentary Council on her election and wish her success. It is an honour indeed to have her among us.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/54/L.9.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/54/L.9?

Draft resolution A/54/L.9 was adopted (resolution 54/12).

The President: We have concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 27.

The meeting rose at 6.15 p.m.